Dear Jim, The Hartingh Sense of Humor, on the unbent FBI 4/23/77

Hartingh caught me by surprise yesterday with his not unfriendly joking. I was also pooped, as I told you, even with a sense of difficult breathing.

So I merely told him I don't like these self-serving letters and will respond vigorously.

Later, when I was less tired and had a chance to think about it I knid of liked it. And what he could have been saying.

With all the agents they have working on FOIA it would appear to stretch the norm for any one to know about more than one other overdue case. Hartingh spoke yesterday about two, deadpan but I'm now certain intending humor I did not then catch at first.

Ordinarily he would know that my PA case is finally being processed? When it was an 11/75 case? And he would ordinarily know the details of what I had written Kelley in response to a letter I was sure Bresson had drafted?

If Bresson shared this with him I do not think it is because Bresson liked it. (This is the Silver Shirt business and the FBI's "determination" that the overlooking of that 1975 FOIA request was "inadvertent." To now.)

I think it is when I was on the way home that I thought of this and then wondered of Hartingh is the first we have encountered who is more or less human.

If he was needling me, I kind of like that. As I kind of like the alternatives.

But he did know.

And he did let me know he knew.

Small world with so many FBI agents in it.

If the people running the FOIA end were smart they'd be looking for more like him. He gives me enough regularly enough for me not to be raising hell all the time over what he does not give me that he also has no right not to give me.

He read me correctly over what I told him about Cointelpro/Sanitation Strike/ Invaders. If there was no assurance that I'd be getting this soon I'd have asked you to make an issue of it in court. That is a search that requires no Hq personnel.

I'll be you that when they comply on this it will not include Cointelpro. And then there we are on Square 1 again.

And then I will ask you to do something about it. And the FBI will have stalled it all that much more.

But not unpleasantly.

Hartingh is a cut above them all. He does his job for the Bureau, holding back, yet is a human about it and not without a gentle sense of humor.

If I do not like what he is doing I do like him more for the way he is doing it. ...

Whatever explains his knowledge of these other overdue cases being processed it would not seem to be within the norm and in not insulting.

But I did like his repetition that I could not be the one ridiculing them fo r their misuse of "inadvertent."

If this is why the FBI switched Smith and put him on I have no complaint.

Oh, well, there are few enough of these light moments, whatever they do or do not mean.

I'm sorry I did not tumble to the delicacy of his humor when I could have.

Best,